

IN THE DRAWINGS:

Please substitute originally-filed FIG. 1 with the revised FIG. 1 provided by the Replacement Sheet submitted concurrently herewith.

REMARKS

Reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims, in view of the following remarks, are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action dated March 6, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2 and 10-12, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as allegedly being anticipated by Takahashi '607 (EP No. 1041607 A1); and rejected claims 5-9 and 16, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Takahashi '607 in view of Ota '270 (U.S. Patent No. 6,549,270).

The Examiner objected to claims 3, 4, 12, and 14 as being based on a rejected claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner also objected to the Drawings based on the assertion that FIG. 1 has not been properly labeled as prior art.

While disagreeing with the rejections indicated by the Examiner, in an effort to expedite the examination of the present application Applicants, by this Amendment, have amended independent claims 1, 10, and 11 to include the limitations of dependent claims 2-3 and 12-13 and have cancelled claims 2-3 and 12-13 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants submit that no new matter has been introduced. The changes to claims 1, 10, and 11 are substantially the same as rewriting claims 3 and 13 in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, claims 1, 10, and 11, as amended, are clearly patentable over the references of record. Accordingly, the immediate withdrawal of the prior art rejections of these independent claims and passage to issue is requested.

Applicants have also revised FIG. 1 to include a prior art legend as evidenced by the Replacement Sheet filed concurrently herewith.

All matters having been addressed and in view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration of this application, and the immediate allowance of all pending claims.

Applicants' Counsel remains ready to assist the Examiner in any way to facilitate and expedite the prosecution of this matter. Please charge any fees associated with the submission of this paper to Deposit Account Number 033975. The Commissioner for Patents is also authorized to credit any over payments to the above-referenced Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 15, 2006
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